

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 7, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, the President of the Navajo Nation, Russell Begaye, made a formal request under Section 501 of the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. 5121-5206) for an Emergency Declaration due to the Gold King Mine spill. We are writing to ask you to swiftly review and respond to this request.

On August 5, 2015, EPA contractors breached a tailing pond at the abandoned Gold King Mine in Colorado releasing more than 3 million gallons of waste water down the Animas River and into the San Juan River in New Mexico. Soon after, water quality monitoring and soil sampling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Navajo Environmental Protection Agency measured levels of pollutants like arsenic, lead, mercury, and cadmium at levels that exceeded the Nation's water quality standards for irrigation, livestock, and drinking water. The ensuing public health, public safety, and environmental impact resulted in a crisis that has drawn emergency response resources from the entire Navajo Nation.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and ask for your timely consideration of President Begaye's emergency declaration request.

Sincerely,



John McCain
United States Senator



Jeff Flake
United States Senator